



International High-level Conference on the Sahel - Communiqué by the co-chairs

Brussels, 23 February 2018

1. On 23 February 2018 an international high-level conference on the Sahel was held in Brussels under the aegis of Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger and President-in-office of the G5 Sahel, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations and Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, at the end of which the following conclusions were drawn:

2. The G5 Sahel, the European Union, the United Nations and the African Union welcome the renewed international commitment to the Member States of the G5 Sahel, which continue to face a number of challenges, in particular recurring acts of terrorism. This conference, which is one of several high-level events held in recent weeks, in particular the G5 Sahel Summit in Niamey on 6 February, has focused the support of the international community on the following three priorities:

On the political and diplomatic front

3. The Co-Chairs called for renewed support for the political efforts of the G5 Sahel countries to achieve the conditions for lasting stability in the region. This includes the capacity of these countries to combat terrorism and trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings, promote sustainable development, establish an efficient governance framework and meet the needs and aspirations of the people throughout their territory, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

The Co-Chairs reiterate their strong condemnation of the terrorist acts perpetrated, remember the civil and military victims of these acts and express their solidarity with the families and countries affected.

They welcomed the progress made in implementing the provisions of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, and encourage full implementation of this agreement. In this regard, they recommended intensifying the fight against terrorism and accelerating efforts, particularly in the implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration measures. Full support was renewed for the independent observer of the Agreement and for the sanctions regime highlighted in UN Security Council Resolution 2374.

In addition, they expressed their concern at the continuing Libyan crisis and their hope of an urgent and lasting resolution of this conflict. Finally, they welcome the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin countries in the fight against Boko Haram.

Security

4. Notable commitments were made, in particular, concerning the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The first operations carried out in recent months are the result of the determination of the G5 Sahel countries to directly address the challenges facing the region. In response to the operational needs and priorities necessary to make the Joint Force fully operational, and expressed by its Commander, cumulative pledges of around €xxx million were made, including €100 million from the European Union, through the African Peace Facility. The Co-Chairs called for permanent funding for the Joint Force.

5. The Co-Chairs took note of the call by the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel to the UN Security Council to consider their request to grant the G5 Sahel Joint Force a mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

6. The Co-Chairs welcomed the decision of the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel to make immediate operational arrangements to support the G5 Sahel Joint Force, such as the Trust Fund for the Joint Force, the Support Committee and the Monitoring Committee. The complementarity of these instruments with existing ones was stressed. The European Union has formally made available to the authorities of the G5 Sahel a dedicated coordination mechanism ('Coordination Hub'), which will accompany the increase in importance of the Support Committee.

7. The Co-Chairs stressed the importance of the relationship of trust between local populations and the Joint Force, and reiterated the need to respect human rights standards, as discussed at the Conference in Brussels on 22 February. In this connection, it was decided to establish a framework for compliance with human rights and International Humanitarian Law for the operations of the Joint

Force, with particular attention to the protection of the rights of women, young people and children.

8. On the basis of the recommendation in UN Security Council Resolution 2391, a technical agreement was concluded between the European Commission, the UN and the G5 Sahel with a view to providing special operational and logistical support to the Joint Force through MINUSMA. The mechanism to ensure respect by the Joint Force for human rights and International Humanitarian Law will be established as part of this agreement.

Development

9. The Sahel continues to face major development challenges that contribute to the vulnerability of the region as a whole. The Co-Chairs have pointed out that the security action of the Joint Force will have an impact only if it is accompanied by development actions and the return of state services, particularly in vulnerable areas.

While recognising the significant support already mobilised by the international community (including €8 billion by the EU and its Member States over the period 2014-2020) for the development of the G5 Sahel countries, the Co-Chairs called for accelerated implementation of national strategies and development actions.

The Co-Chairs also noted the call by the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel to the international financial institutions to consider the consequences of security crises on their public finances.

10. The Co-Chairs welcomed the work carried out on the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme (PIP), which will promote investment projects for the Sahel in the following four areas: Defence and security; Governance; Infrastructure, resilience and human development. The Co-Chairs undertook to support the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel in organising the Round Table on the financing of the Priority Investment Programme in June 2018.

11. The Co-Chairs also welcomed the work done by the members of the Sahel Alliance to accompany the strategic priorities of the G5 Sahel countries. This work is already a first response to the PIP, mobilising €6 billion of future payments (over the period 2018-2022) aimed at ambitious targets such as the employability of young people (creation of 1 million jobs) and energy connection (1.4 million additional households connected to a source of energy). The Sahel Alliance will focus in particular on fragile and unstable areas in which development aid must accompany security efforts. It aims to improve the arrangements for implementing the aid to make them more rapid and flexible. Finally, the Sahel Alliance is an open initiative which will rapidly be able to accommodate other members.

Done at Brussels, 23 February 2018

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